



Beyond Our Horizons



127 8 9

Chapter 1 by ArchAngel

Jonathan Akerman wasn't really a morning person. He always needed a really strong coffee to kick start his day, but today was different, today was getting his full attention. Something wasn't right.

For starters, he was drinking from his novelty heat sensitive mug. He loved that mug, it was a present from his ex-girlfriend, Nikki. The only problem was... it broke last week and the pieces had gone out with the trash.

Secondly, Emily from Finance had come by and dropped the Nilson folder in his IN tray. Twenty minutes later, she walked past again and dropped another folder in his tray. Puzzled, he pulled it open, it was the same Nilson folder, which was very odd. He scrabbled about looking, but there was only that one folder, the first one had now vanished. Was it a practical joke? He peered up from his desk like a meerkat, but nobody was taking any notice of him. Not wanting to make a scene or seem crazy, he didn't say anything.

These incidents could be reasonably explained, but as the day went on, there were more. For lunch he went to the Subway on the corner, but it was gone, a McDonalds stood in its place, a

McDonalds that looked like it had always been there. When he got back to the office, Davis the Sales Manager had suddenly gro

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profile, waiting for the day to end.

Chapter 2 by snowy plover



Unfortunately, the day refused to cooperate. All the other days Jon could remember had gone along with the general notion that morning, midday, afternoon, and evening should follow each other in a predictable order, but this day seemed to have missed the memo about how time was supposed to work. Whenever he looked at the clock, it was random whether it would show a time later or earlier than the previous time he looked.

On normal days, mid-afternoon, he was accustomed to lowering the blinds on his window when the sun had lowered far enough to glare off his computer screen. This day he lowered the blinds several times, one of them when the clock read 9:38 AM.

No one else in the office seemed to notice anything amiss. "What planet have you been living on? Davis has had a moustache for years!" said Amitabh from Market Analysis. "Oh Jon, how could you forget that Nilson's IT department lost all that paperwork last Friday! Why do you think I've been begging you to redo it for days?" said Emily, though, now that he thinks about it, Jon recalls Emily having been on vacation for more than a week.

When a third lunchtime rolled around, Jon just gave up. If the world was going to refuse to make sense, he was at least going to go somewhere he could question his sanity in peace. He headed out of the office and made it as far as the park, where he plopped onto a bench and stared suspiciously at the pigeons. The pigeons cooed and strutted and pecked at the ground, stubbornly pigeon-like. It was somehow refreshing that none of them turned orange or started reciting Walt Whitman.

Jon's phone chimed. In the hope that the device might take a cue from the pigeons and reflect a recognizable reality, he opened his mail app. In the half hour or so since he left his desk, he had, it seemed, received 453 emails with dates ranging from 1852 (informing him of the return of a whaling vessel he'd apparently invested in) to 2103 (warning of current wormhole instabilities).

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We need to talk., the email read.

Jon sighed and leaned back in his office chair. He wished he'd gone out and bought himself a decent one with more lumbar support. What could Nikki want? Their break up was mutual...wasn't it? He was too consumed by work to spend time and she was busy looking for something else. She was a restless soul.

We need to talk.

Hmm, I wonder. Jon typed back a short response, *Ok, when&where?*

Only five seconds later, after he had clicked "Send" did he regret it. Didn't he know relationship 101? Sure, he missed her company when he got off work, and on an insane day like today he could have used her quirky humor. Ah, what the hell.

He blinked and the purple star was in his inbox again and he clicked it.

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